

Likelihood of e-book purchases increase 31% by combining previews and reviews

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New research in the INFORMS journal *Information Systems Research* finds that the purchasing decision of customers considering buying e-books is significantly influenced through easy access to a combination of e-book previews and reviews, resulting in a staggering 31% increase in a consumer's likelihood to purchase an e-book. When exposed to either previews only or online reviews only, purchase likelihood is between 7 and 17%.

The study, "When Seeing Helps Believing: The Interactive Effects of Previews and Reviews on E-Book Purchases," was conducted by Angela Choi of Florida State University, Daegon Cho and Wonseok Oh of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Dobin Yim of Loyola University and Jae Yun Moon of Korea University. Their work suggests that a combination of [e-book](#) previews alongside [online reviews](#) positively influence individual purchase decisions.

The researchers analyzed two months of data on more than 270,000 sessions that comprise clickstream data on consumers' exposure to

previews and reviews and data on their subsequent purchase behaviors.

"Online reviews have served as critical resources for driving traffic and increasing sales, especially for e-books, but have also suffered from many market imperfections such as fake reviews, grade inflation and deliberate manipulation," said Choi.

To enhance consumers' direct product experiences and facilitate the validation of product-taste fit prior to purchase, many platform operators offer online previews. They allow for the opportunity to listen to the first few pages or chapters of a book ahead of [purchase](#).

The notable difference between previews and online reviews is a matter of distance, meaning first-hand knowledge from direct experience, or a preview, versus second-hand knowledge from indirect experience, or an online [review](#).

"Striking the right balance between direct and indirect product experience is becoming an important strategic challenge," concluded Choi.

More information: Angela Aerry Choi et al. When Seeing Helps Believing: The Interactive Effects of Previews and Reviews on E-Book Purchases, *Information Systems Research* (2019). [DOI: 10.1287/isre.2019.0857](https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2019.0857)

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